

March 14, 2011

Testimony in Support of HB 6574 *An Act Increasing the Permissible Size and weight of All Terrain Vehicles and Providing Funds for the Establishment of Trails on State Land for Use by Such Vehicles*

Chairman Maynard, Chairman Guerrera and Members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Chris VanDeHoef and I represent the New England Trail Riders Association (NETRA) an organization that represents over 5,000 OHV riders and enthusiasts throughout New England.

I've represented NETRA for seven years and over that time it has been NETRA's goal to work with the Department of Environment Protection (DEP) to find trails among the thousands of acres of state land for riders of ATVs, OHVs and dirt bikes to ride on.

Currently, section 23-26c of the Connecticut General Statutes, enacted in 1986, requires the DEP to provide some state land for use by OHV's. DEP has not complied with this law for a myriad of reasons, namely, funding to design and build the trails.

NETRA has attempted to work with the DEP over the years to come up with funding avenues for the creation of trails with the DEP taking a hard-line stance that registration is the only method of funding creation. NETRA has long believed this to be a chicken-egg issue. Why or how is NETRA expected to register when there is zero places to ride legally. HB 6574 shows that NETRA has acquiesced on this issue understanding that in the long run, trails are the goal and if up front registration will create enough capital for DEEP to develop the land then we are on board.

This legislation is not perfect and there are areas that we would like to work with the Committee, DEEP, DOT, DMV and the CT Forest and Parks Association to remedy the areas where we find disagreement.

There are almost 60,000 OHV's in Connecticut with zero places, aside from private land, to ride legally. It's NETRA's goal to work with the various interested parties to obtain a slice of land for riding OHVs. Please **SUPPORT HB 6574.**